

Minutes of the City of Takoma Park Tree Commission

March 10, 2020

By Carol Hotton

Location: Council Chambers, Takoma Park Community Center

Present: John Barnwell, Bruce Levine, Co-Chairs; Carol Hotton, Secretary; Tina Murray, Nancy Cohen, Commissioners; Jan van Zutphen, Urban Forest Manager; Jim Woodward, City resident

Meeting convened at 6:50 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes for Feb 11 meeting deferred.

2. Urban Forest Manager update

- A. Appeal on horizon.
- B. 120 trees ordered for Bulk Buy program—8 ordered. Program needs promotion!
- C. Arbor Day set for April 4. Trees: 50 each of redbud, river birch, swamp white oak, willow oak, sycamore.
- D. Tree Care Forum – tentatively set for Apr 18, but no speakers lined up as yet.
- E. Spring street tree planting will start in April. 3 categories: large, medium, small. One contractor will provide all trees. Letters sent to residents allowing them to choose. 100 locations chosen for planting throughout City. Combination of staff, contractor and residents watering newly planted trees last summer during drought worked well. \$25K for ROW trees.
- F. Urban forest manager budget request. Funds for 12 week summer intern, with duties as assigned. Bulk buy: \$15K; consulting: \$5K; tree inventory on public land: \$30K; implementation plant for urban forest management: up for bid. ROW planting: \$25K; removal and maintenance: \$120K, including watering and spraying

3. Budget Discussion.

- A. Council is proposing to grant the City the authority to use money in the tree fund for purposes other than planting replacement trees. Although they indicated that this was ostensibly to fund educational outreach, it is not specifically articulated in the proposed changes. They also have eliminated all strategic planning activities from the initiative, including educational outreach and tree canopy goal exercises. Tree Commissioners agreed to respond within the framework of the budget to indicate opposition to this proposal, to include the point that this proposal weakens the foundational premise of the ordinance in the preservation of the canopy, and therefore arguably promulgates a new tax upon residents. Tina agreed to review the latest draft of the ordinance revisions and propose a follow up memo expressing concern on points in the ordinance that weaken the preservation of the canopy.

- B. Tree Commission should hold annual meetings with City Council to discuss priorities.
- C. City Council – next work session on Tree Ordinance on Mar 18; first reading of draft ordinance set for April 1.

4. Sustainability Resolution.

Zero emissions proposal from sustainability manager in terms of cost and technology is well beyond City's ability to pay. Could suck money out of every other initiative, including support for tree canopy, which ought to be part of any sustainability effort.

Action Item: Determine when budget requests are due and present recommendations from TC. Look at draft tree ordinance revision attached to March 18 agenda.

Adjourned 8:05 pm.